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*L'Organization du Suffrage et l'Expérience Belge.* By JOSEPH BARTHÉLEMY. (Paris: M. Giard and É. Brière, 1912. Pp. 7768.)

Professor Barthélemy's book is an excellent example of the kind of scholarship that obtains in France at the present time. To be heavily laden with all the evidences of thorough research is one thing; but to carry the burden lightly and gracefully, is quite another and French. In the hands of our author political science becomes a gay science as the volume is liberally sprinkled with a sprightly wit and delicate irony; though not for a moment is the masterly grasp that Professor Barthélemy has on his subject allowed to relax. His point of view is plainly conservative; but it is a sort of distilled conservatism which comes from disinterested scholarship and liberal culture. The book is written with the primary object of explaining the mechanism of democracy as developed in its most novel forms in Belgium: plural suffrage, proportional representation, compulsory voting and even representation of interests. But the author is not content merely to describe; having the capacity to react on his subject, he often analyses the social, economic and moral background of political phenomena. Of constitutional metaphysics there is not a trace to be found in the entire work.

Part I consists of a historic introduction which portrays the period 1831-1893, when the electorate was greatly restricted by a high property qualification for suffrage. Beginning with 1848, a widespread agitation was organized by Radicals and Socialists with the aim of abolishing all restrictions on voting; this movement culminated in the revision of the constitution in 1893 which established universal suffrage, though modified by plural voting. Professor Barthélemy's own view of the change is not very sympathetic; he accords democracy a forced welcome. In his opinion, universal suffrage tends to make the popular chamber all powerful and so upsets the equilibrium of the powers of government which, to him, is the essence of the parliamentary régime. Socialism and social legislation, too, are the direct issue of a democratized electorate. All this greatly disturbs the author who is evidently a type of conservative more familiar in America than in Europe.

Part II discusses the results of universal suffrage and the significance of plural voting. The two parties that profited most by the change were the Catholics and Socialists. Political Catholicism is the new force evoked by Socialism in continental Europe, and is particularly powerful in Belgium where Catholicism is indistinguishable from conserva-

tism. As may be expected, the Socialist party, received a tremendous impetus through universal suffrage. In fact the Catholics and Socialists are the only two real protagonists; the Liberals did not know how to adapt themselves to the change, and in consequence have been struck with political sterility, for their voting strength remains about the same at every election. Plural suffrage which gives extra votes to the limit of three, to those possessing property or education, was designed to prevent the sudden capture of the Belgian state by the Socialists. A crisis was thus averted which might have produced a reaction. At the present time the Belgian Socialist party, even though it professes a revolutionary creed, is nevertheless quite moderate in practice. This is to some extent due to plural suffrage which, by delaying the advent of Socialism to power, dampens its revolutionary ardor. Professor Barthélemy considers the complaint that the Catholic party is in power because of plural suffrage is very much exaggerated. He shows by statistics that the Liberals and even the Socialists number many plural voters among their supporters; that the Catholic party benefits but little from this system. If this be so, then why are the clericals so strongly opposed to its abolition?

Voting is obligatory in Belgium. The explanation for this, according to our author, is that, before the law was passed, corrupt citizens were paid *not to vote*, as the secret ballot made it impossible to know whether a vote bought would be delivered. To prevent such practices, compulsory voting was introduced. Another explanation, perhaps, is that this law was intended to offset the rapid growth of Socialism by increasing the vote of the middle classes who frequently neglected their civic duties.

Part III contains a masterly analysis of proportional representation as it is organized in Belgium which was the first country to make extended use of the idea. Proportional representation, advocating as it does mere political fairness, is therefore not an idea to arouse partisan activity, either for or against; hence its progress has been very slow. In the 80's an association was formed to advocate this reform. "When this league was created" remarked M. Nyssens, a Liberal Catholic politician, "there weren't thirty people in all Belgium who had a correct notion of the idea; when we published a notice of the birth of our society, we were regarded as Chinese and our system as a sort of Chinese puzzle." The Belgian law was passed in 1899 by a combination of progressives of all parties. Many Catholics voted for it in spite of the fact that the new method was bound to result in a reduced representation

for them. Professor Barthélemy brings out very clearly that the Catholic party in the long run, benefits from proportional representation; under this system, its majorities, while smaller, are far more stable. It was also hoped that proportional representation would prevent the formation of an anticlerical combination, as each party would have its own list of candidates. The "d'Hondt method," as the Belgian system is known, was especially designed to favor the largest party, i.e., the Catholic; election results have always given the latter more representation than it was strictly entitled to according to popular vote. Prof. Barthélemy, who at times appears in the role of Catholic apologist, makes great efforts to prove the contrary, but he is not quite successful. At present all the Belgian parties endorse proportional representation, because all have profited by it; although the Liberals and Socialists desire to amend the "d'Hondt method" in order to make it more fair. One great benefit of the new electoral system, according to Paul Hymans the Liberal leader, is that it has modified the actions of the extremists and has caused an easy flow of moderate opinion through all the parties." Just because the majority of the Catholic party is always small, its policies have tended towards conciliation. *Gouverner, c'est concilier*, has become its motto. As for the complexities of the system, they exist for the election officers only and not for the voters. The objections raised that proportionalism would produce sleeping sickness on the body politic by crystallizing representation, events have failed to justify; for Belgian politics are quite lively and almost every election has varied in its results. "Belgium," declares Professor Barthélemy, "has almost reached perfection in its organization of electoral machinery. Its scheme may serve as a model to all countries and particularly to France."

J. SALWYN SCHAPIRO.

*Handbuch des Wohnungswesen und der Wohnungsfrage.* By PROF. DR. RUD. EBERSTADT. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1910. Pp. 516.)

This is an important work to which the attention of American students of municipal government has, I believe, not yet been directed. Since the housing problem constitutes today one of the fundamental questions of municipal government, a general work of this character should commend itself to all students of political science; and since Germany has been a leader in this field of social and political activity